

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 QUITO 09326 230111Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 222300Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8416

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

S E C R E T QUITO 9326

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EXDIS

GUAYAQUIL FOR CONSUL GENERAL AND KELLER ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PLOS EFIS PFOR EC

SUBJECT: EFFORTS TO AVOID PROBLEMS DURING COMING TUNA FISHING SEASON;

600 NRT LIMIT AND COST OF LICENSES

REFS: A) QUITO 9325 B) QUITO A-129, DEC 20, 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: POLCOUNS CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY LEGAL ADVISOR ON MORNING OF DECEMBER 22, 1975 TO DISCUSS REMOVAL OF 600 NRT LIMIT ON FISHING VESSELS AND TO STATE OPPOSITION TO ANY INCREASE IN THE COST OF LICENSES. AMBASSADOR GARCIA SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT REMOVAL OF 600 NRT LIMIT AND PROMISED THAT MFA WOULD ARGUE STRONGLY AGAINST ANY INCREASE IN COST OF FISHING LICENSES IN THE INTER-MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 22. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR GARCIA BEGAN DEC 22 MEETING BY SHOWING POLCOUNS A DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECREE WHICH THE FMA WILL TABLE AT THE COUNCIL FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT MEETING ON THE EVENING OF DEC 22. THE PURPOSE OF THE MINISTERIAL DECREE, WHICH WILL HAVE THE FORCE OF LAW, IS TO REMOVE THE 600 NRT LIMIT ON FISHING BY FOREIGN FISHING BOATS IN ECUADOREAN-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 QUITO 09326 230111Z

CLAIMED WATERS. THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THE MINISTRY'S

PROPOSED DRAFT RESERVES THE 40-MILE ZONE IMMEDIATELY OFF THE ECUADOREAN COAST FOR ECUADOREAN NATIONAL FISHERMEN, OR FOREIGN VESSELS OPERATING UNDER AN ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT. PARAGRAPH TWO STIPULATES THAT A MAXIMUM CATCH WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE GOE, BASED ON CONSERVATION OF LIVING RESOURCES, AND REITERATES THAT ECUADOREAN BOATS SHOULD HAVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT THROUGHOUT ECUADOREAN-CLAIMED WATERS. (ALTHOUGH NOT STATED, THE VOLUME OF CATCH STIPULATED BY THE GOE WILL BE RELATED TO THE IATTC QUOTA). PARAGRAPH THREE STATES THAT THE SUBSECRETARY FOR FISHERIES WILL SUSPEND CONCESSIONS FOR FISHING WHEN THE LIMIT ESTABLISHED BY THE GOE IS REACHED. PARAGRAPH FOUR STATES THAT THE DECREE REPLACES MINISTERIAL DECREE 12263 OF DECEMBER 10, 1973.

3. THE PROPOSED DECREE MAKES NO MENTION OF SIZE OF VESSELS, BUT BY REPLACING THE OLD DECREE THAT ESTABLISHED THE 600 NRT LIMITATION, THE LIMITATION IS THEREBY ABOLISHED. (THE PREVIOUS DECREE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL REGISTRY ON DEC 17, 1974-REF B).

4. POLCOUNS, UPON INSTRUCTIONS OF AMBASSADOR, MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO GARCIA REGARDING CONTEMPLATED INCREASE IN PRICE OF FISHING LICENSES.

A) DURING INITIAL CONVERSATIONS WITH MFA ON OCTOBER 14 ON USG AND GOE ACTIONS TO AVOID PROBLEMS, THE EMBASSY HAD SUGGESTED A POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN LICENSE COSTS AS AN INCENTIVE FOR AMERICAN FISHERMEN TO PURCHASE ECUADOREAN LICENSES. MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAD SAID A CUT IN THE COST OF LICENSES IMPOSSIBLE BUT HAD SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING THE COST OF MATRICULAS. WE HAVE NOW BEEN TOLD THAT MATRICULA COSTS WILL REMAIN THE SAME AND THAT THE COST OF LICENSES MAY BE INCREASED.

B) A PRICE INCREASE AT THIS TIME WOULD COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE IN THE US, WOULD BE REGARDED BADLY BY THE US FISHING INDUSTRY AND THE DEPARTMENT, AND WOULD COMPLICATE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR MUTAL EFFORTS TO AVOID FISHING PROBLEMS THIS SEASON.

C) IN ORDER TO GET THROUGH THIS COMING SEASON, THE USG
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 QUITO 09326 230111Z

REQUESTS THAT THE GOE NOT INCREASE THE COST OF LICENSES; IF IT IS ABSOLUTELY POLITICALLY NECESSARY TO DO SO, THAT THE GOE MAKE THE INCREASE MINOR AND NOMINAL.

5. GARCIA SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE COST OF LICENSES HAD ORIGINATED IN A PLANNING AGENCY DOCUMENT AND HAD BEEN CHAMPIONED IN THE COUNCIL FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE. HE AGREED THAT THE MINISTRY OF

FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD MAKE A STRONG CASE IN THE DEC 22 COUNCIL MEETING TO PREVENT A PRICE INCREASE IN LICENSES. THE MINISTRY HAS ALREADY ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO OBTAIN A REDUCTION IN THE COST OF MATRICULAS AND HAVING LOST ON THIS ISSUE WILL ARGUE THAT THERE SHOULD AT LEAST BE NO INCREASE IN LICENSE COSTS. MFA WILL ALSO ARGUE THAT TO INCREASE THE COST OF LICENSES IN JANUARY WOULD BE DISCRIMINATORY TO BOATS THAT HAVE ALREADY PURCHASED LICENSES FOR THIS SEASON, SOME OF WHICH BOUGHT AS EARLY AS OCTOBER. (MFA WILL SUGGEST THAT HENCEFORTH THE GOE ISSUE REGULATIONS ON FISHING BY SEPT 30 TO COVER FROM OCTOBER THROUGH JUNE.)

6. THE GOE'S REGULATIONS REGARDING THE COST OF MATRICULAS AND LICENSES WILL BE ISSUED IN A SEPARATE DECREE, NOT IN THE ONE INTENDED TO REMOVE THE 600 NRT LIMIT.

7. RESULTS OF COUNCIL'S FINAL DECISION ON 600 NRT LIMIT AND COST OF LICENSES WILL BE PROVIDED THE EMBASSY ON DEC 23.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY CANNOT PREDICT COMPLETE OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL'S MEETING, BUT BELIEVES THE 600 NRT LIMIT WILL BE REMOVED AND THAT MFA IS RESOLVED TO MAKE A TOUGH FIGHT AGAINST INCREASING THE COST OF LICENSES.
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